

K. Jostin J.
ON THE
DELIC
OF
FRIENDSHIP.



A
SEVENTH DISSERTATION.

Address'd to the
AUTHOR of the SIXTH.

*Sibere te novi, metues, liberrime Lolli,
Scurrantis speciem præbere, professus Amicum.*

HOR.

L O N D O N :

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ON THE

DEVELOPMENT

OF

THE HUMAN MIND

SEVENTH EDITION



AUTHOR OF THE

THE HUMAN MIND
BY
H. SPENCER

LONDON

AN
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
Rev. Dr. JORTIN.

REV. SIR,

AS great an admirer as I must profess myself of your writings, I little expected that any of them would give me the pleasure that I have just now received from the last of your SIX DISSERTATIONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS.

The other FIVE have doubtless their distinct merits. But in this, methinks, I

B see

see an assemblage, a very constellation, as it were, of all your virtues, all that can recommend the scholar or endear the friend. This last, give me leave to say, is so unusual a part of a learned man's character, and appears with so peculiar a lustre in this discourse, that the public will not be displeased to have it set before them in full view, and recommended to general imitation, with a frankness, which tho' it may somewhat disgust your own delicacy, seems but very necessary on such an occasion and in such times.

I leave it to others therefore to celebrate the happiness of your invention, the urbanity of your wit, the regularity of your plan, the address with which you conceal the point you aim at in this dissertation, and yet the pains you take in seeming obliquely to make your way to it. These and many other beauties which your long study of the antients hath enabled you to bring into modern composition, have been generally taken notice of in your other writings, and will find encomiasts enough among the common herd of your readers.

The

The honour I propose to do you by this address is of another kind; and as it lies a little remote from vulgar apprehension, I shall have some merit with you for displaying it as it deserves.

To come to a point then, next to the total want of FRIENDSHIP which one has too much reason to observe and lament in the great scholars of every age, nothing hath at any time disgusted me so much as the gross indelicacy with which they are usually seen to conduct themselves in their *expression* of this virtue.

I have by me a large collection of the civil things which these lettered friends have been pleased to say of one another, and it would amaze you to see with what an energy and force of language they are delivered. One thing I thought very remarkable, that the greater the parts and the more unquestioned the learning and abilities of the encomiast, just so much the stronger, that is to say, according to the usual acceptation, just so much the more *friendly* are his encomiums.

I have a great example in my eye. A man, for instance, hath a bosom FRIEND, whom he takes for a person of the purest and most benevolent virtue, presently he sets him down for such, and publisheth him to all the world.— Or he hath an intimacy with an eminent POET: and no regard to decency restrains him from calling him a great genius, as Horace, you know, did his friend Virgil, almost to his face.— Or, he is loved and honoured by a great LAWYER or two; and then be sure all the fine things that have been said of your CICEROS, your SCÆVOLAS or your HYDES, are squandered away upon them.— Or, he hath perchance the honour of being well with a great CHURCHMAN, much famed for his political and religious services; down he goes at once for a lover of his country, and the scourge of infidels and free-thinkers, with as little reserve as if he had a JEROM or a father PAUL to celebrate.— Or, once or twice in his life it hath been his fortune to be distinguished by great MINISTERS. Such occasions are rare. And therefore a little grati-

gratitude, we will say, is allowable. But can any thing be said for abominable formal *dedications*?— Or, lastly, he thinks he sees some sparks of virtue even in his ordinary acquaintance, and these, as fast as he observes them he gathers up, and sticks, on the first occasion, in some or other of his immortal volumes.

O Doctor Jortin! if you did but see half the extravagances I have collected of this sort in the single instance of one man, you would stand aghast at this degree of corruption in the learned world, and would begin to apprehend something of your great merit in this seasonable endeavour to put a stop to its progress.

And what above all, grieves me is that this is no *novel* invention; for then it might well have ranked with the other arguments of degeneracy so justly chargeable on the present times; but the all-accomplished antients themselves have, to own the truth, set the example.

I took notice just now of the *INGENIUM* *INGENS* of Horace. The other poets of that time abound in these fulsome encomiums. But I am even shocked to think that such men as *CICERO* and *PLINY*, men so perfect, as they were, in the commerce of the world, and, from their rank and station, so practised in all the decencies of conversation, were far gone in this folly. And yet there are, in truth, more instances of this weakness in their writings than in those of any modern I can readily call to mind.

Something I know hath been said in excuse of this *illiberal manner*, from the *VIEWS* and *CHARACTERS* and *NECESSITIES* of those that use it. And my unfeigned regard for the professors of learning makes me willing that any thing they have to offer for themselves should be fairly heard.

They say then, and with some appearance of truth, that as all the benefit they propose to themselves by their labours is for the most part nothing more than a

little fame (which whether good or bad, as the poet observes,

begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends.)

they think it hard to be denied this slender recompence, which each expects in his turn, and should therefore be not unwilling to pay to others.

They, further, alledge, that as they are generally *plain men*, much given to speak their minds, and quite unpractised in the arts of that chaste reserve and delicate self-denial, to which some few of their order have happily habituated themselves, they hope to be forgiven so natural an infirmity, to which the circumstances of their situation and character fatally expose them.

But, lastly, they say, this practice is in a manner forced upon them by the *malignity of the times*. Let a learned man deserve ever so well of the public, none but those who are known to be of his acquaintance

quaintance think themselves at all concerned to take notice of his services. Especially this is observed to be the constant humour of our countrymen, who rarely speak well of any but their friends, as our polite neighbours rarely speak ill of any but their enemies. Now this malevolent disposition of the learned makes it necessary, they pretend, that such of them as are connected by any bond of friendship should be indulged the greater liberty of commending one another. Unless you will utterly exclude all intercourse of praise and panegyric from human society, which they humbly conceive may be attended with some few inconveniences. To strengthen this last observation they even add, that the public is usually more shy in bestowing its praises on writers of eminent and superior merit than on others. As well knowing, I suppose, that posterity will make them ample amends for any mortification they may meet with at present; and that in the mean time they are more than sufficiently honoured by the constant railings and invectives of the dunces. Lastly, they observe, that in the more

more frivolous and easy kinds of learning, such for instance as are conversant about the collation of MSS, the rectification of POINTS, and the correction of LETTERS, the general and approved custom is for all professors of this class, whether friends or enemies, to cry up each other as much as they please, and that it is even reckoned a piece of incivility not to preface a citation from ever so insignificant a dealer in verbal criticism with some superlative appellation. And why, say they, should these nibblers of old books, "*These word-catchers that live on syllables,*" be indulged in this amplitude of expression to one another, when they who furnish the materials on which the spawn of these vermin are to feed in after ages, are denied the little satisfaction of a more sizeable, as well as a more deserved praise?

I have not been afraid, you see, to set the arguments of these unhappy advocates for themselves in as strong a light as they will well bear, because I can easily trust your sagacity to find out a full and decisive answer to them.

In the *first* place, you will refer these idolaters of FAME, for their better information, to that curious discourse on this subject, which makes the *fourth* in the present collection. Next, you will tell them that you by no means intend to deprive them of their just praise, but that they must not set up for judges in their own case, and presume to think how much of it they have reason to look for from their friends. You will further signify to them that the truest office of friendship is to be sparing of commendation, lest it awaken the envy of a malicious world; that there is a kind of fascination in praise which wise men have been justly suspicious of in all ages; and that a grain or two from those who are not used to be prodigal of this incense, is an offering of no small value. But chiefly and lastly, you will give them to understand that true honour is seated not in the mouths but hearts of men; and that, for any thing they know, one may be forced to entertain the highest possible esteem of their virtues, tho', for their sakes, and for
other

other wise reasons, one has that virtuous command of one's tongue and pen as not to acquaint them with it.

Then, as to the *plainness* and *openness* of *mind* which is said to make a part in the composition of a man of letters, you will tell them that this is the very foible you most lament, and most wish them to correct: that it exposes them to much censure and many other inconveniencies; that this frankness of disposition makes them bestow their praises on those whom the world has no such esteem for, or whom it would rather see left in obscurity and oblivion; that they often disgust their betters by this proceeding, who have their reasons for desiring that a cloud may remain on the characters of certain obnoxious and dangerous writers; that by such warm and unmanaged commendations they become partners, as it were, of their ill deserts; that they even make themselves answerable for their future conduct; which is a matter of so very nice a consideration, that the great master of life, though he had not the virtue always to act up to his own maxim, deli-

vers it for a precept of special use in the commerce of the world,

QUALEM COMMENDES ETIAM ATQUE
ETIAM ADSPICE.

For it signifieth nothing in the case before us, whether the recommendation be to a patron or the public,

For all these reasons you will assure them that this ill habit of speaking their mind on all occasions, just as nature and blind friendship dictate, is that which more than any thing else exposes them to the contempt of knowing and considerate men.

Lastly, with regard to that other frivolous plea taken from the *malignity of mankind* and even those of their own family and profession, you will convince them that this is totally a mistake, that the world is ready enough to take notice of superior eminence in letters, that it is even apt to grow extravagant in it's admiration, and that this humour of the public is itself a reason for that reserve with which their friends,

friends, if they truly merit that name, ought to conduct themselves towards them: that this splendor of reputation, which is so generally the consequence of distinguishing learning, requires to be allayed and softened by the discrete management of those who wish them well, lest it not only grow offensive to weak eyes, but dazzle their own with too fond an imagination of their own importance, and so relax the ardour of their pursuits or betray them into some unseemly ostentation of their just merits. You will further suggest, that great achievements in letters are sufficiently recompenced by the silent complacency of self-esteem and of a good conscience; while lesser services demand to be brought out and magnified to the public eye for the due encouragement and consolation of those who would otherwise have but small reason to be satisfied with themselves. You might even observe, that silence itself is often a full acknowledgment of superior desert, especially when personal obligations, as well as other reasons, might provoke them to break through it. In such cases it is to be understood, that, if a
friend

friend be sparing of his good word, it is in violence to his inclination, and that nothing but the tender apprehension of pushing an acknowledged merit too far, withholds him from giving a public testimony to it. But, in conclusion, you will not omit to set them right with regard to one material mistake in this matter; that whereas they complain of the superior estimation in which the professors of verbal criticism are held amongst us, whom with a strange malignity they affect to represent as the very lowest retainers to science, you, and all true scholars, on the other hand, maintain that the *study* of words is the most useful and creditable of all others; and that this genuine class of learned men have reason to pride themselves in their objected, but truly glorious character of **VERBAL CRITICS.**

And now, sir, having seen how little can be said in justification of that offensive custom which the learned have some how taken up of directly applauding one another, I come to the more immediate purpose of this address, which was to shew how singularly

gularly happy you have been in avoiding this great vice, and to take occasion from the example you have now set us to recommend the contrary virtue to the imitation of others.

I am sensible there are some difficulties to be encountered at setting out. A generous mind will probably feel some reluctance, at first, to the scheme of suppressing his natural feelings, and of withholding from his friend that just tribute of praise which many others perhaps are but too willing should be withheld from him. But all scruples of this sort will be got over when the full merit of your example hath been considered ; I mean when the inducements you had to give into the common weakness on this occasion come to be fairly drawn out ; by which it will be clearly seen that you have the glory of setting a precedent of the most heroic magnanimity and self-denial, and that nothing can possibly be urged in the *case* of any other, which you have not triumphantly gotten the better of in your own.

* I observe

I observe it to your honour, sir, you have ventured on the same ground in this famous Dissertation, which hath been trodden by the most noted, at least, of our present writers. But this is not enough. It will be of moment to consider a little more particularly the *character* of the person whom you chuse to follow or rather nobly emulate in this route. And lest you should think I have any design to lessen the merit of your conduct towards him by giving it in my cool way, take it from one of those *warm* friends who never balk their humour in this sort of commendations. Upon asking him what he thought of the learned person's character, and telling him the use I might perhaps make of his opinion in this address to you, he began in a very solemn way.

" The author of the D. L. says
 " he, is a writer whose genius and learn-
 " ing have so far subdued envy itself,
 " (though it never rose fiercer against any
 " man, or in more various and grotesque
 " shapes) that every man of sense now
 " esteems

“ esteems him the ornament, and every
 “ good man the blessing of these times.”

Hold, said I, my good friend, I did not mean to put your eloquence to the stretch for this panegyric on his *intellectual* endowments, which I am very ready to take upon trust, and, to say the truth, have never heard violently run down by any but very prejudiced or very dull men. His *moral* qualities are those I am most concerned for.

“ His *moral*, resumed he hastily, shine
 “ forth as strongly from all his *writings*
 “ as the other, and are those which I have
 “ ever revered most. Of these, his
 “ love of letters and of virtue, his veneration of great and good men, his delicacy of honour in not assuming to himself or depressing the merit of others, his readiness to give their due to all men of real desert whose principles he opposes, even to the fastidious, scoffing Lord
 “ SHAFTESBURY and the licentious BAYLE,
 “ but above all, his zeal for religion and
 “ for truth, these are qualities, which, as
 “ often as I look into his volumes, attract

D

“ my

“ my admiration and esteem. Nor is this
 “ enumeration, tho’ it be far from com-
 “ plete, made at random. I could illuf-
 “ trate each of these virtues by various in-
 “ stances, taken from his works, were it
 “ not that the person you mean to address
 “ is more converfant in them, and more
 “ ready, I may presume, to do him justice
 “ on any fitting occasion than myself.
 “ The liberty indeed he takes of dissenting
 “ from many great names is confiderable,
 “ as well as of speaking his free thoughts
 “ of the writers for whom he hath no
 “ esteem. But the *one* he doth with that
 “ respect and deference, and the *other* with
 “ that reason and justice, and *both* with
 “ that ingenuous opennefs and candour,
 “ the characteristics of a truly great mind,
 “ that they, whom he opposes, cannot be
 “ angry, and they whom he censures, are
 “ not misused. I mention this the rather on
 “ account of the clamour which has so
 “ frequently been raised againft the free-
 “ dom and severity of his pen. But there
 “ is no mystery in the case. No dead wri-
 “ ter is so bad but he has some advocates,
 “ and no living one so contemptible but
 “ he

“ he has some friends. And the misfor-
 “ tune is, that while the present generation
 “ is too much prejudiced to do him right,
 “ posterity, to whom the appeal of course
 “ lies, are not likely to have it in their
 “ power to rejudge the cause : the names
 “ and writings, he most undervalues, being
 “ such as are hastening, it seems, to that
 “ oblivion which is prepared for such
 “ things.

“ These, continued he, are some of the
 “ obvious qualities of the WRITER, and
 “ for the personal virtues of the MAN—
 “ But here I may well refer you to Dr.
 “ JORTIN himself, who will take a pleasure
 “ to assure you, that his private character
 “ is not less respectable than his public ;
 “ or rather, if the one demands our vene-
 “ ration, that the other must secure our
 “ love. And yet why rest the matter on
 “ the credit of ONE, when ALL of his ac-
 “ quaintance agree in this, that he is the
 “ easiest in his conversation, the frankest
 “ and most communicative, the readiest to
 “ do all good offices, in short the friend-
 “ liest and most generous of men.”

“ my admiration and esteem. Nor is this
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 “ plete, made at random. I could illus-
 “ trate each of these virtues by various in-
 “ stances, taken from his works, were it
 “ not that the person you mean to address
 “ is more conversant in them, and more
 “ ready, I may presume, to do him justice
 “ on any fitting occasion than myself.
 “ The liberty indeed he takes of dissenting
 “ from many great names is considerable,
 “ as well as of speaking his free thoughts
 “ of the writers for whom he hath no
 “ esteem. But the *one* he doth with that
 “ respect and deference, and the *other* with
 “ that reason and justice, and *both* with
 “ that ingenuous openness and candour,
 “ the characteristics of a truly great mind,
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 “ and most communicative, the readiest to
 “ do all good offices, in short the friend-
 “ liest and most generous of men.”

Thus far our zealous friend. And tho' I know how much you agree with him in your sentiments, I dare say you cannot but smile at so egregious a specimen of the high *complimentary manner*. But though one is not to expect an encomiast of this class will be very sensible of any defects in the person he celebrates, yet it cannot be disowned that this magnified man hath his foibles as well as another. I will be so fair as to enumerate some of them.

As he is conscious of *intending* well, and even greatly in his learned labours, he is rather disposed to think himself injured by malicious slanders and gross misrepresentations. And then, as he hath abundantly too much wit, especially for a great divine, he is apt to say such things, as though dull men do not well comprehend, they see reason enough to take offence at. Besides, he doth not sufficiently consult his ease or his interest by the observance of those forms and practices which are in use amongst the prudent part of his own order. This, no doubt, begets a reasonable disgust. And
even

even his friends, I observe, can hardly restrain their censure of so great a singularity.

“ He is so much in his study, they say,

“ that he hardly allows himself time to

“ make his appearance at a levee. Not

“ considering that *illud unum ad laudem*

“ *cum labore directum iter qui probaverunt*

“ *prope jam soli in SCHOLIS sunt relictæ.*”

These infirmities, it must be owned,

are very notorious in him; to which it

might be added, that he is very indis-

creet, sometimes, in the topics and turn of

his conversation. His zeal for his FRIEND

is so immoderate, that he takes fire even

at the most distant reflection he hears cast

upon him. And I doubt no consideration

could with-hold him from contradicting

any man, let his quality and station be

what it would, that should hazard a joke,

or an argument, in his company, against

RELIGION.

I thought it but just to take notice of

these weaknesses. And there may perhaps

be some others, which I do not now recol-

lect. Yet on the whole, I will not deny

that

that he may fairly pass for an able, a friendly, and even amiable man.

This person then, such as he is, such at least as the zealots represent and you esteem him, you have the pleasure to call your FRIEND : Report says too, that he has more than a common right to this *title* : that he has won it by many real services done to yourself. How doth the consciousness of all this fire you ! and what pains do I see you take to restrain that impatient gratitude which would relieve itself by breaking forth in the praises of such a friend !

And yet—in spite of all these incitements from *esteem*, from *friendship*, and from *gratitude*, which might prompt you to some extravagance of commendation, such is the command you have of yourself, and so nicely do you understand what belongs to this intercourse of learned friends, that in the instance before us you do not, I think, appear to have exceeded the modest proportion even of a temperate and chaste praise.

I assure

I assure you, sir, I am so charmed with the beauty of this conduct, that tho' it may give your modesty some pain, I cannot help uniting the several parts of it, and presenting the entire image to you in one piece.

I meddle not with the argument of your elaborate dissertation. It is enough that your readers know it to be the same with that of another famous one in the D. L. They will know then that among the various parts of that work none was so likely, as this, to extort your applause. For it is universally, I suppose, agreed that, for a point in classical criticism, there is not the man living who hath a keener relish for it than yourself. And the general opinion is, that your honoured friend hath a sort of talent for this kind of writing. Some persons, I know, have talked at a strange rate. One or two I once met with, were for setting him much above the modern, and on a level, at least, with the best of the old, critics. But this was going too far, as may appear to any
one

one that hath but attentively read and understood what the judicious Mr. UPTON and the learned Mr. EDWARDS have, in their various books and pamphlets, well and solidly and with great delight to many discerning persons, written on this subject. Yet still I must needs think him considerably above MINELLIUS and FARNABY; and almost equal to old SERVIUS himself, except that perhaps one doth not find in him the singular *ingenuity* (a) you admire in the last of these critics.

But be this as it will, it seems pretty well agreed that the learned person, tho' so great a divine, is a very competent judge, and no mean proficient in classical criticism. There are many specimens of his talents in this way dispersed thro' the large and miscellaneous work of the D. L. But the greatest effort of his genius, they say, is seen in the explanation of the 6th book of the *Æneïs*. And with all its defects I can easily perceive you were so struck with it that it was with the utmost reluctance you found yourself obliged by to

(a) Diff. vi. p. 259.

the regard, which every honest critic owes to truth and by the superior delicacy of your purpose, to censure and expose it.

Another man, I can easily imagine, would have said to himself before he had entered on this task, " This fine commen-
 " tary, which sets the most finished part
 " of the *Æneïs* and indeed the whole po-
 " em in so new and so advantageous a
 " light, tho' not an essential in it, is yet
 " a considerable ornament of a justly
 " admired work. The author too is my
 " particular friend ; a man, the farthest
 " of all others from any disposition to
 " lessen the reputation of those he loves ;
 " the subject hath been well nigh exhaust-
 " ed by him ; and the remarks I have to
 " offer on his scheme are not, in truth,
 " of that consequence as to make it a
 " point of duty for me to lay aside the
 " usual regards of friendship on their ac-
 " count. And though HE hath greatness
 " of mind enough not to resent this liber-
 " ty, his impatient and ill judging friends
 " will be likely to take offence at it. The
 " public itself, as little biassed as it seems

“ to be in his favour, may be even scandalized at an attempt of this nature, to which no important interests of religion or learning seem to oblige me.”

After this manner, I say, would a common man have been apt to reason with himself. But you, sir, understand the *rights* of literary freedom, and the *offices* of sacred friendship at another rate. The *one* authorize us to deliver our sentiments on any point of literature without reserve. And the *other* will not suffer you to dishonour the man you love, or require you to sully the purity of your own virtue, by a vicious and vulgar complaisance.

Or to give the account of the whole matter in your own memorable words,

The 6th book of the *Æneïs*, you observe, tho' the most finished part of the xii. is certainly obscure. “ Here then is a field open for criticism, and all of us, who attempt to explain and illustrate Virgil, have reason to HOPE that we may
“ make

“make some *discoveries*, and to FEAR that
 “we may fall into some *mistakes*; and this
 “should induce us to conjecture with
 “*freedom*, to propose with *diffidence*, and
 “to dissent with *civility*. Ἀγαθὴ δ' ἐπίς
 “ἡδε βροτοῖσι, quoth old Hesiod (*b*).”

Which shall I most admire, the dignity,
 the candour, or the prudence that shine forth
 in this curious paragraph, which stands as a
 sort of preface to the refutation, as no
 doubt you designed it, of your friend's
 work? “*You have reason to hope that, after*
 “the unsuccessful efforts of the author of
 “the D. L., *You may make some discoveries.*”
 In this declaration some may esteem
 you too sanguine. But I see nothing
 in it but a confidence very becom-
 ing a man of your talent at a *disco-*
very, and of your importance in the lite-
 rary world. You add indeed, as it were
 to temper this boldness, that “*You have*
 “*reason to fear too that you may fall into*
 “*some mistakes.*” This was rather too mo-
 dest; only it would serve, at the same
 time, to intimate to your friend what he
 E 2 had

(*b*) Diff. vi. p. 251.

had to expect from the following detection of his errors. But you lead us to the consequence of these principles. "*They should induce us, you say, TO CONJECTURE WITH FREEDOM.*" Doubtless. And the dignity of your character is seen in taking it. For shall the authority or friendship of any man stand in the way of my conjectures?

————— scilicet, ut non
Sit mihi prima fides ; et verè quod placet,
ut non
Acriter elatrem !

— " TO PROPOSE WITH DIFFIDENCE." Certainly very *prudent*, especially for one sort of *free-conjecturers* ; and, by the way, no bad hint to the person you glance at, whose vice it is thought to be, above that of most other writers, never to trouble himself with composing a book on any question, of whose truth he is not previously and firmly convinced —
" AND TO DISSENT WITH CIVILITY." A *candid* insinuation which amounts to this,
" That when a writer hath done his best

" to

“to shew his learning or his wit, the
 “man at whose expence it is, especial-
 “ly if he be a friend, is, in consideration
 “of such services, not to take it amiss.”

I have been the freer to open the
 meaning of this introductory paragraph,
 because it lets us into the spirit with which
 you mean to carry yourself in this learned
 contention. For a *contention* it is to be,
 and to good purpose too, if old Hesiod be
 any authority. Ἀγαθὴ δ' ἔρις ἡδὲ βροτοῖσι,
 quoth old Hesiod. Tho' to make the ap-
 plication quite pat the maxim should have
 run thus, Ἀγαθὴ δ' ἔρις ἡδὲ φιλοῖσι, which I
 do not find in old Hesiod.

However the reason of the thing ex-
 tends to both. And as *friends* after all are
 but *men*, and sometimes none of the best
 neither, what need for standing on this
 distinction?

Yet still the question returns, “Why so
 cool in the entrance of this friendly debate?
 Where had been the hurt of a little amica-
 ble parlying before daggers-drawing? If

a man, in the true spirit of ancient chivalry, will needs break a lance with his friend; he might give him good words at least and shake hands with him before the onset. Something of this sort might have been expected, were it only to save the reputation of *dissenting with civility*."

Now in answer to this question, which comes indeed to the point, and which I hear asked in all companies, I reply with much confidence, *first*, that the very foundation of it is laid in certain high fantastical notions about the duties of friendship; and in that vicious habit of civility that hath so long been prevalent among learned friends; both which props and pillars of the cause I may presume with great modesty to have entirely overturned.

But *secondly* and chiefly I say that the whole is an arrant misrepresentation; for that you have indeed proceeded in this affair, with all that civility and even friendliness that could in reason be expected from you; I mean so far as the sobriety and *Reverence*, as the French term it (it is plain the

the virtue hath not been very common amongst us from our having no name to call it by) of a true critical friendship will allow.

Now there are several ways by which a writer's civility to his friend may appear without giving into the formal way of *address*: just as there are several ways of expressing his devotion to his patron, without observing the ordinary forms of *dedication*; of which, to note it by the way, the latest and best instances I have met with, are, "A certain thing prefatory to
" a learned work, entitled, *The Elements of*
" *Civil Law*," and "Those curious two
" little paragraphs prefixed to *The Six*
" *Dissertations on different Subjects*."

You see the delicacy of the learned is improving in our days in more respects than one. And take my word for it, you have contributed your share to this good work. For as you began, so you conclude your volume with a master stroke of *address*, which will deserve the acknowledgment and imitation of all your brethren,

as I now proceed distinctly and with great exactness of method to unfold.

THE FIRST way of distinguishing a learned friend, without incurring the guilt of downright compliment, is *by writing on the same subject with him*. This is an obvious method of paying one's court to a great writer. For it is in effect telling him that the public attention is raised to the argument he hath been debating; and that his credit hath even brought it into such vogue that any prate on the same subject is sure of a favourable reception. This I can readily suppose to have been your first motive for engaging in this controversy. And the practice is very frequent. So when a certain edition of SHAKESPEAR appeared, tho' it had been but the amusement of the learned editor, every body went to work, in good earnest, on the great poet, and the public was presently over-run with editions and criticisms and illustrations of him. Thus too it fared with the several subjects treated in the D. L. Few were competent judges of the main argument, or disposed to give it a candid

candid interpretation. But every smatterer had something to say to this or that occasional disquisition. Thus SYKES, and STEBBING grew immortal, and, as the poet says truly, *in their own despite*. And what but some faint glimmering of this *bright reversion*, which we will charitably hope may be still kept in reserve for them, could put it into the heads of such men as WORTHINGTON, H. G. C. and PETERS, to turn critics and commentators on the book of JOB? .

SECONDLY, Though I acknowledge the full merit of this way of treating a learned friend, I am rather more taken with another, which is that *of writing against him*. For this demonstrates the esteem one hath of the author's work, not only as it may seem to imply a little generous rivalry or indeed envy, from which infirmity a truly learned spirit is seldom quite free, but as it shews the answerer thought it worth *writing against*; which, let me assure you, is no vulgar compliment; as many living writers can testify, who to this hour are sadly lamenting that their ill fortune hath

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never

never permitted them to rise to this distinction. Now, in this view of the matter, I must take leave to think that you have done a very substantial honour to the author of the famous *Discourse on the sixth book of Virgil*, in levelling so long and so elaborate a disputation against him. And he, of all other men, ought to be of my mind, who to my certain knowledge hath never done thus much for one in a hundred of those learned persons whose principal end in commencing writers against him was to provoke him to this civility.

But then, THIRDLY, this compliment of *writing against* a great author may be conveyed with that address, that he shall not appear, I mean to any but the more sagacious and discerning, to be *written against* at all. This curious feat of *leger-de-main* is performed by *glancing at his arguments without so much as naming the person or referring to him*. This I account the most delicate and flattering of all the arts of literary address, as it expresseth all the respect, I have taken notice of under the preceding article, heightened with a certain

awe and fear of offence, which to a liberal mind, I should think must be perfectly irresistible. It is with much pleasure I observe many examples of this kind in your truly candid dissertation, where without the least reference, or under the slight cover of—*some friends of Virgil say (c)*—*some commentators have thought (d)*—*Virgil's friends suppose (e)*—and the like, you have dextrously and happily slid in a censure of some of your friend's principal reasonings. But, to be impartial, though you manage this matter with admirable grace, the secret is in many hands. And whatever be the cause, hath been more frequently employed in the case of the author of the D. L. than any other. I could mention, at least, a dozen famous writers, who, like the flatterers of Augustus, don't chuse to look him full in the face, but artfully intimate their reverence of him by indiscreet glances. If I single out one of these from all the rest it is only to gratify the admirers of a certain eminent PROFESSOR, who, as an Oxford friend writes me word, hath many delightful instances of this sort in his very edifying

edifying discourses on the HEBREW POETRY.

FOURTHLY, Another contrivance of near affinity to this, is, when you oppose his principles indeed, *but let his arguments quite alone.* Of this management a wary reader will discover many traces in your obliging discourse. And can any thing be more generous than to ease a man of the shame of seeing his own reasonings confuted, or even produced when the writer's purpose requires him to pay no regard to them? Such tenderness, I think, though it is pretended to by others, can, of right, belong only to the true friend. But your kindness knows no bounds. For,

FIFTHLY, Tho' you find yourself sometimes obliged to produce and confute his reasonings, *you take care to furnish him with better of your own.* The delicacy of this conduct lies in the good opinion, which is insinuated of the writer's conclusion, and in the readiness which you shew to support it even in spite of himself. There is a choice instance in that part of your discourse, where

where agreeing with your friend that the punishments of *Tartarus* are properly *eternal*, you reject his reason for that conclusion, but supply him with many others in its stead.

“ This alone will not prove the eternity
 “ of punishments for, &c.—BUT if to this
 “ you add the Platonic doctrine, that very
 “ wicked spirits were never released from
 “ *Tartarus*, AND the silence of *Virgil* as to
 “ any dismissal from that jail, AND the
 “ censure of the *Epicureans*, who objected
 “ to religious systems the eternity of
 “ punishments,

“ *Æternas quoniam pœnas in morte timendum*;
 “ AND the general doctrine of the mytho-
 “ logists, AND the opinion of *Servius*,
 “ that *VIRGIL* was to be taken in this
 “ sense, we may conclude that the punish-
 “ ments in his *Tartarus* were probably
 “ eternal (f).”

Never let men talk after this of the nig-
 gardliness of your friendship, when, tho’
 you

you take from him with one hand, you restore him five-fold with the other.

After such an overflow of goodness, nothing I can now advance will seem incredible. I take upon me to affirm therefore,

SIXTHLY, That it is a mere calumny to say that you have contented yourself, tho' you very well might, with mere *negative* encomiums. You can venture on occasion to *quote from your friend in form*, and, as it should seem, with some *apparent approbation*. An instance is now before me. You cite what the author of the D. L. says of "*the transformation of the ships into sea-deities*, by which, says he, VIRGIL would insinuate, I suppose, the great advantage of cultivating a naval power, such as extended commerce and the dominion of the ocean: which in poetical language is becoming *deities of the sea*."

To which you add, "In *favour* of this opinion it may be further observed, that AUGUSTUS owed his empire in
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"a great measure to his naval victories (g)".

Now can any thing be civiler than this, or more expressive of that amiable turn of mind, which disposes a man to help forward a lame argument of his friend, and give it the needful support of his authority? For it hath been delivered as a maxim by the nice observers of decorum, that wherever you would compliment another on his opinion, you should always endeavour to add something of your own that may insinuate at least some little defect in it. This management takes off the appearance of *flattery*, a vice which the Latin writers, alluding to this frequency of unqualified assent, have properly enough expressed by the word *ASSENTATIO*. But catch you tripping in this way if one can. It is plain you went on this just principle in the instance before us, which otherwise, let me tell you, I should have taken for something like an attempt towards downright adulation. As here qualified, I set it down for another instance of just compliment,

ment, more direct indeed than the other *five*, yet still with that graceful obliquity which they who know the world, expect in this sort of commerce. And I may further observe, that you are not singular in the use of this mode of celebration. Many even of the enemies of this author have obligingly enough employed it when they wanted to confirm their own notions by his, or rather to shew their parts in first catching a hint from him, and then, as they believe, improving upon it—Still I have greater things in view. For,

SEVENTHLY, You not only with the highest address insinuate a compliment in the way of irritation, but you once or twice *express it in full form*, and with all the circumstance of panegyrical approbation. Having mentioned the case of the infants in Virgil's purgatory, which hath so much perplexed his learned commentators, you rise at once into the following encomium.

“ It is an *ingenious* conjecture proposed in
 “ the D. L. that the poet might design
 “ to discountenance the cursed practice of
 “ exposing and murdering infants.”

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This was very liberal, and I began to think you had forgotten yourself a little in so explicate a declaration. But the next paragraph relieved me. "It might be added, that Virgil had perhaps *also* in view to please Augustus, who was desirous of encouraging matrimony and the education of children, and extremely intent upon repeopling Italy which had been exhausted by the civil wars (b)." It is plain you have still in your eye that sage rule which the men of manners lay down, of *qualifying* your civilities. So that I let this pass without farther observation. Only I take leave to warn you against the too frequent use of this artifice, which but barely satisfies for calling your friend's notion "*an ingenious conjecture*."

Not but are there others who see this contrivance in another light, and treat it as an art of *damning with faint praise*; a censure which one of the zealot friends presumes to cast, with much injustice and little knowledge of the world, on the very leader and pride of our party. Whereas I

deliver it for a most certain truth, that the fainter and feebler our praise of any man is, just so much the better will it be received by all companies, even by the generality of those who call themselves his best friends. And so apprehensive indeed am I of this nice humour in mankind, that I am not sure if the very slight things I am forced to say of yourself, though merely to carry on the purpose of this address, will not by certain persons, inwardly at least, be ill taken. And with this needful apology for myself I proceed to celebrate,

EIGHTHLY, The last and highest instance of your civilities to your admired friend, which yet I hope to vindicate from any reasonable suspicion of flattery; I presumed to say in the foregoing article that you had *once or twice* hazarded even a direct compliment on the person whose system you oppose. I expressed myself with accuracy. There is *one other* place in your dissertation, where you make this sacrifice to friendship or to custom. The passage is even wrought up into a resemblance of that unqualified adulation, which I condemn so much, and
from

from which, in general, your writings are perfectly free. I could almost wish for your credit to suppress this one obnoxious paragraph. But it runs thus,

“ That the subterraneous adventures of
 “ Æneas were intended by Virgil to repre-
 “ sent the *initiation* of his heroe, is an
 “ *elegant* conjecture, which hath been laid
 “ before the public, and set forth to the
 “ best advantage *by a learned friend.*” (i)

I confess to you I did not know at first what to do with the two high-flown epithets, *elegant* and *learned*, which stand so near together in one sentence. Such accumulated praises had well-nigh overset my system. And I began with much solicitude to consider how I should be able to reconcile this escape of your pen with your general practice. But taking a little time to look about me, I presently spied a way of extricating both of us from this difficulty. For hang it, thought I, if this notion of the heroe's adventures in the infernal regions be *elegant*, it is but a conjecture; and so poor a matter as this were

hardly worth pursuing, as the author of the D. L. hath done, through almost a fourth part of a very sizeable volume.

And then as to the term *elegant*, to be sure it hath a good sound; but more than a *third* part of this choice volume of yours, I observed, is employed in making appear that the conjecture, whatever it be, hath not the least feature of *truth* in it. And *elegance*, altogether devoid of truth was, I concluded, a very pitiful thing, and indeed no very intelligible encomium. Well, but let there be as little truth as you will, in this conjecture, still it *hath been set forth to the best advantage*, and to crown all by a *learned friend*. Here a swarm of fresh difficulties attacked me. *Sed nil desperandum te duce*. For why talk of *advantage*, when the conjecture after all would not bear the handling? It was but mighty little (your friendship would not let you do more) which you had brought against it. And the conjecture I saw, was shrunk to nothing, and is never likely to rise again into any shape or substance. So that when you added by a *learned friend*, I could not for my

my life, help laughing. Surely, thought I, the reverend person intends on this occasion to be pleasant.—Indeed you often are so with a very good grace, but I happened not to expect it just at this moment.—For what *learning* worth speaking of could there be in the support of a notion, which was so easily overturned without any?

You may be sure, I mean no reflection in these words. No body questions your erudition. But it was not your fortune or your choice to make a shew of it in this discourse. The propriety of the epithet *learned*, then did not evidently and immediately appear.

However, as I knew there was in truth, no small quantity of learning in the piece referred to, and that the author of the D. L. whatever BATE, and PETERS, and JACKSON may say or insinuate, is unquestionably, and to a very competent degree learned, I began to take the matter a little more seriously. And upon looking attentively at the words a second time, I thought a very natural account might be given

given of them upon other principles. For as to the substantive *friend*, why might not that for once be put in for your own sake as well as his? The advantages of friendship are reciprocal. And tho' it be very clear to other people which is the gainer by this intercourse, who knows but Dr. JORTIN, in his great modesty, might suppose the odds to lie on his own side?

And then for *learned*, which had embarrassed me so much, I bethought myself at last there was not much in that, this attribute having been long prostituted on every man who pretends, in any degree, to the profession of letters.

So that on the whole, tho' I must still reckon this for an instance, amongst others, of that due measure of respect with which your politeness teaches you to treat your friends, yet I see no reason for charging it with any excess of civility.

And now, sir, having been at all this pains to justify you from the two contrary censures of having done *too little* and *too much*,

much, let us see how the account stands. Malice itself, I think, must confess that you have not been lavish of your encomiums. You have even dispensed them with a reserve, which tho' I admire extremely, will almost expose you to the imputation of *Parsimony*. And yet, on the other hand, when we compute the number and estimate the value of your applauses, we shall see cause to correct this censure. For, from the EIGHT articles I have so carefully set down, and considered, it appears at length, that you have done all due honour to your friend, and in ways the most adapted to do him honour. That is to say, *You have adopted his subject—You have written against him—You have glanced at him—You have spared his arguments—You have lent him some of your own—You have quoted him—You have called his conjecture ingenious—Nay elegant—And you have called himself learned, and, what is more, your friend.*

And if all this will not satisfy him or rather his friends (for I hope and partly believe he himself thinks nothing of this whole matter) I know not for my part, what

what will. I am sure (and that should be your satisfaction as it is mine) that you have gone as far as was consistent with *delicacy* of friendship (which may reasonably imply in it a little jealousy) and with the virtuous consciousness of that importance which writers of your class ought to be of to themselves. And I hope never to see the day when you shall be induced by any considerations to compliment any man breathing at the expence of these two virtues.

And here, on a view of this whole matter, let me profess the pleasure I take in observing that you, (and I have remarked it in some others) who have so constantly those soft words of *candour*, *goodness*, and *charity* in your mouth, and whose soul, one would think, was ready to melt itself into all the weaknesses of this character, should yet have force enough not to relent at the warmest influences of *friendship*. Men may see by this instance that *charity* is not that unmanly enfeebling virtue which some would represent it; when, tho' ready, on fit occasions, to resolve and open itself to

a *general* candor, it shuts up the heart close and compact and impregnable to any *particular* and personal attachment.

I take much delight in this pleasing contemplation. Yet, as our best virtues, when pushed to a certain degree, are on the very point of becoming vices, you are not to wonder that every one hath not the discernment or the justice to do you right. And to see, in truth, the malignity, of human nature and the necessity there was for you to inculcate in your *third* discourse, *The duty of judging candidly and favourably of others*, I will not conceal from you, at parting, what hath been suggested to me by many persons to whom I communicated the design of this address. “ They “ said,” besides other things, which I have occasionally obviated in the course of this letter, “ that the excellent person whom you have allowed yourself to treat with so much indignity and disrespect (I need not take notice that I use the very terms of the objectors) in this poor and disingenuous criticism upon him, had set you an example of a very diffe-

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rent fort, which you ought in common equity, and even decency, to have followed." They observe that his own pen never expatiates more freely and with more pleasure, that when it finds or takes an occasion to celebrate the virtues of some deserving friend. They own, the natural warmth and benevolence of his temper is even liable to some excess on these inviting occasions. And for an instance they referred me to a paragraph in the notes on *Julian*, which tho' I know you do not forget, I shall here set down as it stands in the last edition. He had just been touching a piece of ecclesiastical history. "But this," says he, I leave with Julian's adventures to my learned friend, Mr. JORTIN, who, I hope, will soon oblige the public with his curious dissertations on ecclesiastical antiquity, composed like his life, not in the spirit of controversy, nor, what is worse, of party, but of truth and candour. (k)"

Here, said they insultingly, is a specimen of that truly liberal spirit with which one learned friend should exert himself when

(k) Julian, p. 316.

when he would do honour to another. Will all the volumes which the profound ecclesiastical remarker hath published, or ever will publish, do him half the credit with posterity as this single stroke, by which his name and virtues are here adorned and ushered into the acquaintance of the public? And will you still pretend to vindicate him from the scorn which every honest man must have for him, after seeing how unworthily he requites this service by his famous SIXTH DISSERTATION in this new volume?

This and a great deal more to the same purpose was said by them in their tragical way. I need not hint to you, after the clear exposition I have given of my own sentiments, how little weight their rhetoric had on me, and how easily I turned aside this impotent tho' invenomed invective from falling on your fame and memory. For the *compliment*, they affect to magnify so much, let every candid reader judge of it for himself. But as much had been said, in this debate, concerning FRIENDSHIP, and the persons with whom it was most proper
to

to contract it, I found myself something struck with the concluding observation of one of these rhetorical declaimers. As it was delivered in a language you love, and is besides, a passage not much blown upon by the dealers in such scraps, I have thought it might perhaps afford you some amusement. He did not say where he found it, and you would not like it the better, if he had, but as I remember, it was delivered in these words. Εμοὶ πρὸς φιλοσόφους ἐστὶ Φιλία πρὸς μὲν τοὺς ΣΟΦΙΣΤΑΣ, ἢ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΙΣΤΑΣ, ἢ τοιοῦτο γένος ἕτερον ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΚΑΚΟΔΑΙΜΟΝΩΝ, ὅτε ΝΥΝ ΕΣΤΙ ΦΙΛΙΑ ΜΗΤΕ ΥΣΤΕΡΟΝ ΠΟΤΕ ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ.

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LINCOLN'S-INN,

Nov. 25, 1755.